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General Assembly
Forty-ninth Session

Official Records

First Committee

1st Meeting
Tuesday, 20 September 1994, 4.10 p.m.
New York

Temporary Chairman: Mr. Essy . . . . . (Côte d'Ivoire, President of the General Assembly)

The meeting was called to order at 4.10 p.m.

Election of the Chairman of the First Committee

The Temporary Chairman *(interpretation from French)*: Rule 103 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly provides that each Main Committee shall elect a Chairman, one or more Vice-Chairmen and a Rapporteur. These officers shall be elected on the basis of equitable geographical distribution, experience and personal competence.

The elections shall be held by secret ballot unless the Committee decides otherwise in an election where only one candidate is standing. The nomination of each candidate shall be limited to one speaker, after which the Committee shall immediately proceed to the election.

Furthermore, rule 110 of the rules of procedure provides that congratulations to the officers of a Main Committee shall not be expressed except by the Chairman of the previous session — or, in his absence, by a member of his delegation — after all the officers of the Committee have been elected.

This meeting has been convened for the election of the Chairman of the First Committee.

Are there any nominations?

Mr. Henze (Germany): Next week the head of the delegation of Germany to the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session — Foreign Minister Mr. Klaus Kinkel — will express to you, Sir, our congratulations on your election to the presidency of the Assembly. However, I wish to take this opportunity to extend to you our best wishes on your election today.

At the same time I should like to convey to your predecessor, Mr. Samuel Insanally of Guyana, our deeply felt appreciation and our thanks for his great efforts and his outstanding role in guiding the work of the General Assembly at its forty-eighth session.

In the absence of Ambassador von Wagner, who was the Chairman of the First Committee during the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly, I have the privilege of conveying to the Committee, on his behalf, sincere appreciation for the cooperation and support that he received as Chairman throughout the session.

It is my great honour to propose Mr. Luis Valencia-Rodríguez, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary and Permanent Representative of Ecuador to the United Nations as Chairman of the First Committee during the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

Ambassador Valencia-Rodríguez is both a distinguished diplomat and a highly respected scholar. His outstanding skills in the field of international law and diplomacy are widely known and appreciated. Prior to his appointment as Permanent Representative of Ecuador to the United Nations, he served his country in a variety of roles — notably as Ambassador to Bolivia, Brazil, Peru, Venezuela and Argentina — as well as in the capacity of leader or member of numerous official delegations to various multilateral forums.

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This record contains the original texts of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned *within one week of the date of publication* to the Chief, Verbatim Reporting Section, Room C-178, and incorporated in a copy of the record. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

I should also like to highlight the fact that Ambassador Valencia-Rodríguez is by no means a newcomer to the United Nations. From 1959 until 1964 he served at the permanent mission of Ecuador — first as Counsellor, and then as Minister. From 1974 to 1981 he headed the delegation of Ecuador to the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea, and he headed his country's delegations to the thirtieth and thirty-seventh sessions of the United Nations General Assembly.

From 1970 to 1986 Ambassador Valencia-Rodríguez, in his personal capacity, was a member of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. He has served in the same capacity since 1992, and his service will continue until 1996. He chaired that Committee during three of its terms.

As I mentioned earlier, Ambassador Valencia-Rodríguez is also a highly respected scholar. He has taught in the areas of diplomatic practice, the pacific settlement of international disputes and the law of the sea, and he has published extensively in these areas, as well as in the field of human rights.

I am deeply convinced that, in view of his extensive experience and his diplomatic skills, Ambassador Valencia-Rodríguez will be an excellent Chairman of the First Committee of the General Assembly, especially at this time when the world community and the Assembly face fundamental challenges that have a direct effect on international peace and security as well as on disarmament — the areas that define the work of the First Committee.

I propose that Ambassador Valencia-Rodríguez be elected Chairman of the First Committee by acclamation.

The Temporary Chairman *(interpretation from French):* His Excellency Mr. Luis Valencia-Rodríguez has been nominated by the representative of Germany. Since only one candidate has been nominated, I propose that under rule 103 the Committee decide not to hold a secret ballot.

It was so decided.

The Temporary Chairman *(interpretation from French):* I therefore declare His Excellency Mr. Luis Valencia-Rodríguez of Ecuador elected Chairman of the First Committee by acclamation.

The meeting rose at 4.15 p.m.